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NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE DAILY CABLE

Monday 3 July 1978

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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Monday, 3 July 1978,

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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CONTENTS

25X1

CHINA-VIETNAM: Disagreement

Page 1

LEBANON: Situation Report

Page 2

CHINA: Anniversary Commemoration

Page 3

USSR: Exercise Activity

Page 5

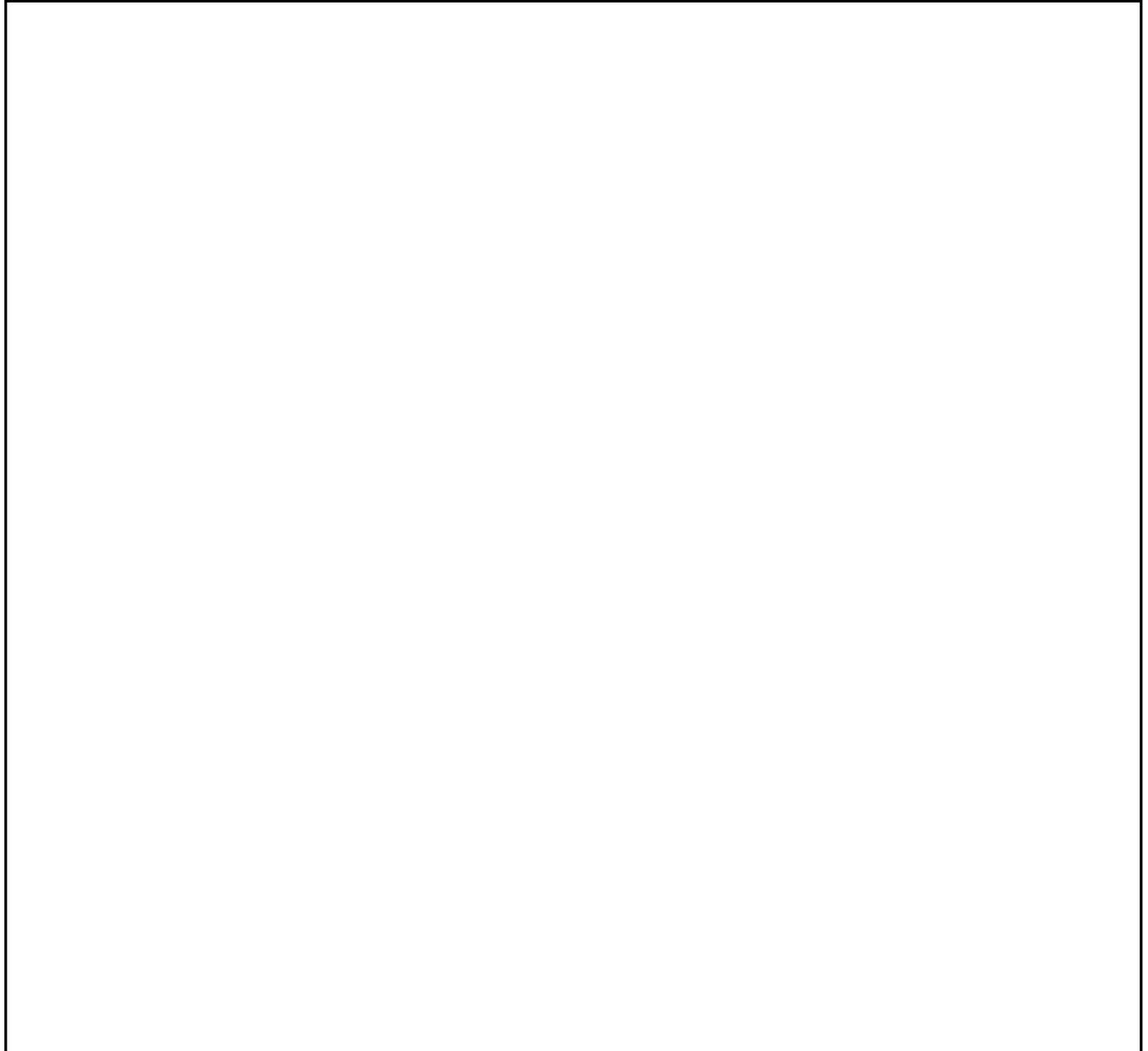
BRIEFS

Page 6

Cambodia
Zaire

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CHINA-VIETNAM: Disagreement

[Redacted] Chinese and Vietnamese negotiators have been unable to resolve their disagreement over procedures in the evacuation of overseas Chinese from Vietnam, and Chinese evacuation ships remain anchored off the Vietnamese coast.

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[] Representatives from the two sides met in Hanoi on Friday--the eighth such meeting since 19 June--but failed to resolve the main dispute over which side should decide who is eligible to leave on the Chinese ships. The Chinese have pressed the Vietnamese unsuccessfully to allow evacuation ships to dock in Ho Chi Minh City--rather than at Vung Tau--and have asked that the ships be allowed to remain in port longer than the three days stipulated by Hanoi.

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[] The Vietnamese apparently claim that their national "sovereignty" is involved in these questions and, in so doing, have made compromise difficult. There is still no sign that either side is preparing to take any military action. []

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LEBANON: Situation Report

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[] *//The fighting between Syrian peacekeeping forces and rightwing Lebanese Christian militiamen in eastern Beirut this weekend will further aggravate already strained Syrian-Christian relations.//*

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[] *//The fighting began on Saturday, apparently when Christian militiamen provoked the Syrians, who responded with artillery and mortar fire. The Christians had earlier declared a general strike for Saturday to mourn the massacre of Christian villagers in northeastern Lebanon on Wednesday. The Christians believe Syrian troops were responsible for the massacre.//*

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[] *//Christian militia leader Bashir Jumayyil was briefly detained by a Syrian unit on Saturday and then released. A cease-fire on Sunday was largely ineffective, but efforts to arrange a new one are underway.//*

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[] *//Although most Christian leaders probably want to avoid a full-scale military confrontation with the better-armed Syrians, their control over the militiamen is tenuous. Extremist Christian groups may try to prolong the fighting to spark a major crisis.//*

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[] *//The situation could become even more complex and dangerous if the fighting should spread to include Muslim and Palestinian forces in western Beirut. These forces have avoided significant involvement in previous Syrian-Christian clashes.//*

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[] //Syrian President Assad probably wants to prevent a major crisis from developing with the Christians, but local Syrian commanders have overreacted to Christian attacks in the past and may do so again.//

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[] //Syrian forces in the Beirut area, anticipating a new outbreak of fighting, have been strengthening their positions in Christian east Beirut for several weeks. Syrian units have also moved into key positions on roads running into Beirut from outlying Christian strongholds.//

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[] //The Syrians have three brigades and at least four commando battalions around the capital. []

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CHINA: Anniversary Commemoration

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[] *China's commemoration on Saturday of the 57th anniversary of the Communist Party revealed continuing tension within*

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the leadership over such issues as the legacy of Mao Tse-tung and the campaign against followers of the ousted "gang of four." The centerpiece of the anniversary--the first official publication of a speech Mao made in 1962--seemed to reflect a compromise between those such as party Chairman Hua Kuo-feng, who want to preserve the Mao legacy and limit future purges, and others led by Vice Chairman Teng Hsiao-ping, who seek a wider purge and some lessening of Mao's image.

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[] The speech itself seemed to have something for everyone, and even Teng, who has been in the forefront of the effort to devote less attention to the works of Mao, probably did not oppose its publication. Teng would even be eager to disseminate such points as Mao's warning to provincial officials that they will be overthrown if they continue to suppress criticism of themselves by the people; his claim that demotion and transfer are good things; and his admission that he had made mistakes and had been criticized.

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[] Teng has been touting a pragmatic line that relegates Communist theory to second place; he seems to be behind a renewed effort to remove provincial officials whose political loyalty he suspects and to purge or at least demote some national-level officials with whom he does not see eye to eye. Teng has long argued that Mao was not infallible and that his mistakes, as well as his accomplishments, must be pointed out.

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[] Media commentary on the speech, however, has seemed to focus on those aspects with which Teng would be least comfortable but which fit closely with the views of Hua Kuo-feng. Editorials in the party's daily newspaper and its monthly journal *Red Flag* cite those portions of Mao's speech that offer a conciliatory approach to officials who have made mistakes in the past. The editorials warn against being too quick to label people political enemies and targets for a purge. In his public speeches, Hua himself has consistently called for lenient treatment of erstwhile political opponents, and the editorials in fact quote some of these pronouncements.

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[] One of the editorials refers to a passage in Mao's speech in which he expressed doubt that China's economy can be significantly modernized in 50 years and said that it will take closer to 100 years. Mao's speech came at a low point in China's economic development, and his pessimism at that time is understandable.

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[] Because of China's current effort to catch up with the West by the end of the century, however, the editorial's reference to the publication of that portion of Mao's speech may reflect concern that these current efforts are unrealistic and that a more measured pace would be more fruitful. This would be a direct rebuke to Teng, whom the media recently quoted as having urged Chinese scientists to develop integrated circuits in one year after Hua had agreed to a three-year program.

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[] Teng nevertheless managed in a less authoritative article in the party daily to take a swipe at the Mao legacy. An item published on Saturday makes a ritualistic negative reference to former Chief of State Liu Shao-chi, who was Teng's patron and the highest ranking victim of the Cultural Revolution of the mid-1960s. But the article then goes on to apply the label of "China's Khrushchev"--long associated only with Liu--solely to the "gang of four" and to fallen Defense Minister Lin Biao. This is unprecedented and may be an effort at least to remove this label from Liu and, in a larger sense, to cast aspersions on Mao, who pinned this tag on Liu during the Cultural Revolution. []

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USSR: Exercise Activity

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[] *An exercise involving Soviet ground and air forces in East Germany begins today and will continue through the week. This is the sixth exercise the Soviets have announced in accordance with the 1975 Helsinki agreement. With 30,000 men participating, it is also the largest.*

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[] Apparently no Western observers have been invited to the exercise. Western observers attended four of the past announced exercises, all on Soviet territory. The Helsinki document stipulates only that the signatory states will "voluntarily" invite observers to military maneuvers, but there is no legally binding requirement. During the CSCE negotiations, the USSR refused to agree to a mandatory exchange of observers.

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[] The Soviets have never before announced an exercise involving their troops outside the USSR. Soviet troops did, however, participate in maneuvers announced by Poland in 1976. There is no indication that the forces of other countries will participate. []

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BRIEFS

Cambodia

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[] A Phnom Penh radio broadcast on Saturday of a message to Peking signed by Pol Pot as party secretary and Prime Minister casts doubt on earlier reports of his ouster by Foreign Minister Ieng Sary. The Cambodians have confirmed to the Thai that Ieng Sary will make a long-delayed visit to Bangkok in mid-July; he presumably would be reluctant to make the trip if he were consolidating his position following a coup. []

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Zaire

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[] Zaire has postponed making a decision to break relations with Belgium. Radio Zaire announced on Saturday that President Mobutu has called for a full Politburo meeting on Thursday to discuss the situation. []

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